

South Main to close for 48 hours

South Main Street will close for 48 hours starting 7 a.m. Feb. 8, lasting until Feb. 9 to allow construction crews to install a 48-inch concrete pipe through a 15-foot trench.

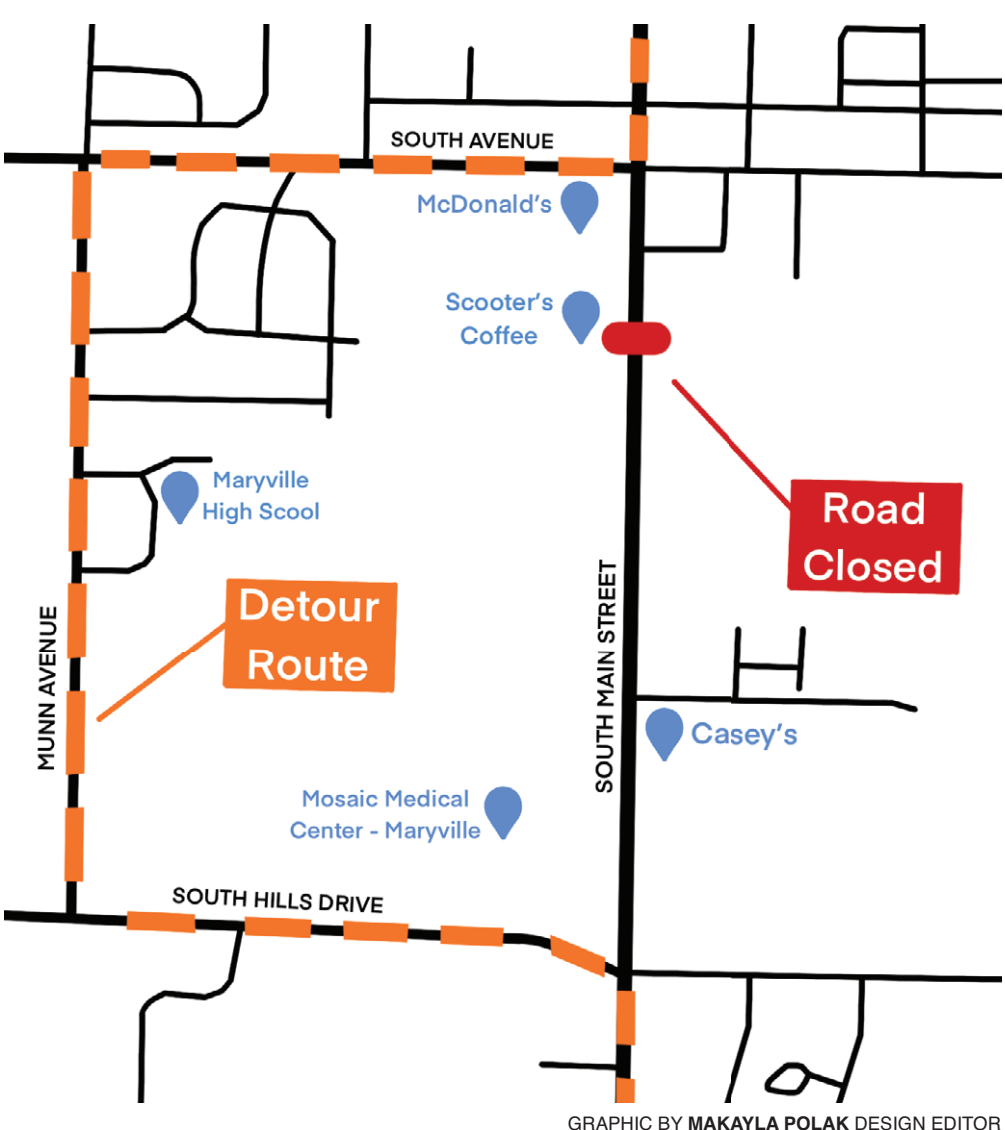
All businesses on Main Street will still be accessible during the street closure; however, traffic will be closed from Scooter's Coffee to Nodaway Valley Bank. There will be a detour for through traffic on Munn Avenue, South Avenue and South Hills Drive.

"There is no way to bridge across safely with a pipe like that," City Manager Greg McDanel said.

McDanel said Tuesdays and Wednesdays are typically the lowest single days for sales and that this is ordinarily the lowest quarter for sales. So, this would likely be the best time for the lowest impact on businesses around town.

McDanel said the city is working with Maryville Public Safety to have a presence on those days to reduce the amount of people cutting through parking lots to avoid the closure.

He said he was looking on the bright side, and that this is the only planned closure on Main Street during construction on the South Main Improvement Project.



Local schools see substitute teacher shortages

SIDNEY LOWRY News Editor | @sidney_lowry

After nearly two full years of navigating through the pandemic, schools nationwide are still facing major effects due to COVID-19, such as multiple teachers and students out sick or quarantining, substitute shortages, or supply shortages that impact school lunches. Nodaway County is no different.

Three Nodaway County school districts – Nodaway-Holt R-VII, West Nodaway R-I and Maryville R-II School Districts – have had issues with more teachers in quarantine than at previous points of the pandemic.

Maryville High School Principal Thom Alvarez said though student quarantines have been down in comparison to previous years, a much larger number of teachers have been missing school due to COVID-19.

West Nodaway School District Superintendent Mitch Barnes said the district schools have had similar issues with teachers having to miss school days.

"Sometimes there's been days where we have smaller classes, so we double up those classes," Barnes said. "There have been a couple days where I thought we were going to have to close to survive."

As a result of more teachers being out due to COVID-19, more substitute teachers are needed to take over their classes.

"I think sometimes not as many people have signed up as years past as this year and last year because of the exposure factor," Alvarez said. "I think sometimes subs are retired teachers and people in the community of the retirement age, so they're a little hesitant to come and increase their exposure."

Nodaway-Holt pays substitutes \$80 a day, and Superintendent Jeff Blackford said the possible risk of getting the virus usually outweighs the pay for most of the district's current substitutes.

Maryville High School said that though interest in substituting from retirement-aged people has been down, its student teachers have stepped up to fill in the gaps.

"Knock on wood, we've been fortunate to have most of our days covered, and we've worked a lot with the college," Alvarez said. "We have a lot of student teachers here, so we're able to use them. If they turn in their sub paperwork, they can get paid to sub. We've been fortunate to have a number of student teachers in our district to help us."

SEE DISTRICTS | A4



West Nodaway School District Superintendent Mitch Barnes addresses the crowd during the school board's meeting about possibly switching to a four-day school week to save money and resources.

BLACK STUDENT UNION SPIRIT WEEK EVENTS

Monday

Feb. 21

Show your Hair-itage

Students are encouraged to wear their natural hair, and the DI Office will be giving out hair tips.

Tuesday

Feb. 22

Top Tier Tuesday

Students on campus are invited to "dress to impress."

Wednesday

Feb. 23

What's the Word Wednesday

There will be a pop culture themed scavenger hunt in the DI Office from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Thursday

Feb. 24

Throwback Thursday

The Black Student Union invites students to play games at 6 p.m. on the third floor of the Student Union.

Friday

Feb. 25

For the People Friday

Students on campus are invited to wear black to show support for the Black Lives Matter movement.

Northwest celebrates Black health and wellness

SIDNEY LOWRY News Editor | @sidney_lowry

Every year, Black History Month has a different theme, and this year's theme is surrounding Black health and wellness. The events Northwest is holding are meant to feature speakers and show movies with people who have made historical strides in Black health and well-being.

Diversity and Inclusion Assistant Vice President Justin Mallett said the theme this year is important because of the pandemic.

"Covid is affecting very large rates of historically marginalized and historically underrepresented communities, in particular Black communities," Mallett said. "So be-

ing able to be able to understand the importance of health and wellness with any marginalized community is very important."

Not many people are aware of the historical contributions that Black scientists, doctors and other professionals have made in the area of health and wellness, Mallett said, the ignorance being another contributing factor in the choice of theme.

The DI Office will be sharing historical facts on its social media page throughout the month with Black history facts.

To kick off events for the month, Eddie Glaude Jr. will be visiting at 7 p.m. Feb. 3 in the Charles Johnson Theater to give a lecture over Black history, social justice and being an "ally."

"Dr. Eddie Glaude is probably one of the most well-respected researchers in the country, as relates to the works of James Baldwin, other historical components," Mallett said. "So to be able to have someone of this status come to Northwest is a huge thing."

The DI Office is hosting a movie night at 6 p.m. Feb. 16 in the J.W. Jones Student Union Boardroom.

The showing will be of the documentary "The Color of Medicine: The Story of Homer G. Phillips Hospital," which is about a St. Louis hospital that employed the largest number of Black doctors and nurses in the world.

SEE HISTORY | A4

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ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR
Black Student Union President Sherry Harper and Secretary Asmina Conn stand with their fists in the symbol for Black Lives Matter. Northwest's BSU has come far since its beginning with a steady increase in the organization's numbers since its inception.

Students advocate for honoring Black history

KENNEDY KALVODA
NEWS REPORTER | @KKalvoda1

As Black History Month begins, people are called to take some time during this month to reflect on and discuss Black history in the U.S. and around the world. One of the main advocates for discussing and honoring Black history on campus is Northwest's Black Student Union.

Northwest's BSU started officially having meetings in January 2019. The organization was originally called Alliance of Black Collegians. Although BSU was officially established in 2019, there had been people calling for Northwest to implement a BSU on campus as early as 2016. Since its inception, a goal of the organization has been making Black students feel more comfortable on campus.

BSU President Sherry Harper said Black history is our history, and people from other backgrounds need to learn more about it than just the basics. She said this can be done by taking more

educational avenues besides the general ones that are offered by the University, such as African world and other history classes.

"I really think that Black History Month, especially for Black organizations who are passionate about our Black history and our Black culture, it's an opportunity for us to not only educate ourselves but to educate the rest of our campus on how great our culture really is," Harper said.

Northwest's BSU has come far since its beginning. There has been a steady increase in the organization's numbers since its inception, and the organization has increased its meeting times from biweekly to weekly.

Harper also said that in the most recent years, there has been more participation from other people of color and white students, and students who are not Black feel more comfortable attending the meetings.

Harper said BSU is a vessel for change, especially considering the location of the University.

"I think that, especially at a

predominantly white institution, at a campus in a Republican town on the edge of Missouri where the political environment is not always rooting for us, I feel like it is ridiculously important, especially while going into adulthood and learning who you are and trying to figure life out, that you have somewhere to go where you feel safe. And so, I think that's what the Black Student Union is for me," Harper said.

BSU Secretary Asmina Conn recently decided to step up and take on a leadership role in the organization.

"Being that this is a predominantly white institution and the Black community is so small, I felt it was my duty and obligation to be a leader on campus and to promote diversity, equity and inclusion," Conn said. "I want this to be a safe space not only for the Black community but also for the rest of the students that attend here."

She said it's important for people to know Black culture in order

to destigmatize the community and get rid of stereotypes.

"I think it's important for groups like Black Student Union to be founded and accessible at different universities. That way, those of other backgrounds and cultures can come out and get to understand us better and try to change the stigma," Conn said.

Conn said what makes Black Student Union unique from other organizations on campus is its small size. They have become very tight knit, the members of the organization are like a family. They look out for each other and give each other help and support.

"It's an opportunity to create a safe space to inspire, to help develop and mold people," Conn said. "It's about spreading love and awareness and all-around contributing to a good cause. There's no one right answer. It's just all-around a great opportunity not only for people who are African American, but for everyone."

Senate announces Northwest is ahead in food drive against Missouri Western

KENNEDY KALVODA
News Reporter | @KKalvoda1

The Student Senate reconvened Feb. 1. Senators discussed a range of topics including the food drive contest and flowergrams.

Student Senate President Bailey Hendrickson announced Northwest is ahead of Missouri Western State University in a food drive competition the two schools are competing in. North-

west's most recent number was 696.5 pounds worth of canned food, and Missouri Western's was 500.2 pounds. She said that the winner, which will receive an honorary trophy, will officially be announced at the Missouri Western versus Northwest basketball game in St. Joseph, Missouri, Feb. 5. Hendrickson encouraged senators to attend the game if possible.

The Civic Service Committee, led by Joseph Etheridge and Luundo Fataki, announced the winter blood drive will take place Feb. 16-17 from 11:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. in the Tower View Room of the J.W. Jones Student Union. If students are interested in donating blood, they can visit www.savealife.com/group and enter code CZ.

Student Activities Council President Brady Netzel said that Flowergrams are still available. Any student can send up to three free roses to anyone on campus. There is a limited number of roses, so it is first come, first served.

Flowergrams ordering days are Feb. 1-3 on the second floor of the Student Union at the info tables. The roses will be available for pickup at the information tables in the Student Union from Feb. 10-11. Students will receive an email from sacspec@nwmissouri.edu letting them know their roses are available to pick up.



MADDI GERHARDT PHOTOGRAPHER
Student Activities Council Representative Brady Netzel addresses Student Senate about SAC's upcoming "Flowergrams" during Tuesday's meeting. Any student can send up to three free roses to anyone on campus. There is a limited number of roses, so it is first come, first served.

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COVID-19 tests peak, boosters lag during January

NATHAN ENGLISH
Managing Editor | @nathan_3nglish

After coming off a record-setting January for COVID-19 cases in Nodaway County, as well as the rest of the U.S., health officials are hoping for a quieter second month in 2022.

Nate Blackford, president of Mosaic - Maryville, said the hospital had issued over 3,000 virus tests during the first month of the year with 1,110 of those tests coming back positive, far eclipsing the previous record of 680 positives in a single month. “That’s in a month where home tests were readily available, and people were probably doing more of that than even came to this hospital,” Blackford said. “So, then that gives us some sense into the actual volume, if you will. It was a crazy month.” Free at-home COVID-19 tests ordered from the U.S. Postal Service were expected to begin arriving as early as this week. Some 60 million households had ordered at-home tests as of Friday. The amount of COVID-19 patients visiting the clinic had receded toward the end of January and the beginning of February, Blackford said. Traditionally, hospitalizations have lagged behind case rates by a week or two. The hospital president said he expects it will be some time before the decreased cases will show in terms of hospitalizations. Eight people

are hospitalized in the county due to the virus, according to the most recent data available at the time of publication. Remdesivir is still being used by Mosaic as the primary treatment option for those hospitalized with COVID-19. Previously, antibody infusions were the main prescribed regimen for COVID-19 patients. The state controlled the supply of antibody infusions and restricted the number distributed since the Sewer-shed Project — designed to test wastewater in Missouri to determine virus variants — found omicron was by far the most prevalent variant. “I think, you know, there might have been some decision that ‘Hey, if I get COVID, I’ll just get an infusion and deal with it that way,’” Blackford said. “Because those infusions are, you know, the eligibility for those are more narrow, that’s not something you can necessarily bank on as being the way you’ll treat COVID.” Blackford said there are alternative options to treat hospitalized patients, but a majority of those options have a broad range of “contraindications,” meaning they can’t be taken in congruence with a large number of other medications. Anecdotal, Blackford said, he has seen less severity in omicron positive patients than other previous variants; the new



ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR
A volunteer fills syringes with the Moderna vaccine during the Nov. 18 COVID-19 booster event. Northwest hosted two booster events in the Carl and Cheryl Hughes Fieldhouse to give people somewhere to get their booster fast and easy.

1,110 positive tests occurred at Mosaic - Maryville in January

42 % of vaccinated Nodaway County residents have received a booster

variant, however, has been far more contagious than its predecessors. Omicron presents more as a traditional cold without the loss of taste or smell, which became a hallmark of previous COVID-19 variants. A recent study has shown unvaccinated individuals are 23 times more likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19 than those vaccinated with a booster. Lagging vaccination rates were a constant issue in the county, state and country since the vaccines were released to the public in late 2020. Now, not enough

vaccinated individuals are getting their booster. Just over half of the 85 million eligible Americans have received their third dose of the vaccine, placing the U.S. firmly behind many other wealthy countries in booster administration. Nearly 48% of the county population has been vaccinated against COVID-19. Of those fully vaccinated, a little over 42% have received their booster shot. “It’s starting to lag off. It dies down a little bit just because, you know, honestly, those who want to have gotten those (boosters)

already have,” Blackford said. “We still think it’s important, but I think we’ll continue to see that wane,” he added. Lt. Amanda Cullin, member of the Crisis Response Team 2, said Northwest is looking into ways to encourage students, faculty and staff to get booster shots. While “nothing is off the table,” Cullin said, the incentives from the University will likely not be on the scale of the fall 2021 incentives. Northwest awarded \$67,500 dollars in scholarships as part of a drawing for vaccinated students last semester.

Professors continue to adapt teaching to COVID-19

JAKE PRATER
News Reporter | @JakobLPrater

Entering the second year of the pandemic, teachers across the nation continue to have their livelihoods and professions altered in ways they hadn’t been before. Assistant professor Debra Brown from the Fine Arts Department wrote in an email to the Missourian that since the pandemic started, discussions and liveliness in the classroom have dropped. “When everyone is wearing masks, it makes it difficult as a teacher to read facial expressions, especially in classes of more than 25,” Brown said in the email. “Also, many students seem sad or weary...a lot.” Associate professor Jennifer Wall from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics said in an email to the Missourian about how synchronous teaching leads to her having to worry about other things that she wouldn’t in person, such as if everyone can see her, hear her and see her screen. “It’s just a lot more mentally taxing than teaching every-one face-to-face in the same room,” Wall said in the email. Switching to online teaching hasn’t been the same

for all Northwest teachers. Instead of having lectures via Zoom, some have tried a different approach. Department of Natural Sciences associate professor James Campbell wrote in an email that he tried alternating attendance lectures at first so students would only attend on certain days, but neither Campbell nor his students liked that method. Campbell said online learning was harder for a lab class because his students don’t have the in-person interactions and demonstrations they’d normally have. “I did make some changes to my labs because they are generally close quarters where social distancing was difficult,” Campbell said. “One of these changes was using pre-lab videos to prepare students for that day’s activities.” Associate professor Ajay Bandi also tried another strategy. He would upload his lectures ahead of time for the students to go through on their own because synchronous learning, such as using Zoom lectures, doesn’t work as well in a computer science class. “In computer science, we have to demonstrate lots of programs, source codes, all that stuff,” Bandi said. Another issue impacting professors throughout the

pandemic has been attendance. “The large surges of quarantine/isolations at the beginning of each semester have been a challenge,” Campbell said. Brown also said that although quarantines this semester are shorter since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed its length for isolation, there seems to be more of them. Wall said that attendance has been like “a revolving door.” “Of anything in my long teaching career, I never dreamed a pandemic would affect my teaching. Taking that a step further, I also never thought a pandemic would last this long,” she said. This comes as the World Health Organization warns against premature victory declaration as the omicron variant surges nationwide. “Though overwhelming at times, I will continue each day, week, semester, etc. until this terrible virus is either gone or controlled and take what I’ve learned from the experience and make it work for me and my students in the future,” Brown said.

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ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR

Sigma Kappa members Kaitlyn Morris and Megan Wyntheiser sit at a booth in the J.W. Jones Student Union to fundraise to honor the memories of two sisters, Morgan McCoy and Haily Hayes. All proceeds will go to the Missouri Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the Missouri Mental Health Foundation.

Sorority holds memorial fundraiser

JAKE PRATER
News Reporter I @JakobLPrater

The Kappa Alpha chapter of Sigma Kappa held a fundraiser last week to honor the memories of two of their sisters, Morgan McCoy and Haily Hayes. All of the proceeds Sigma Kappa raises will go to the Missouri Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the Missouri Mental Health Foundation.

McCoy died early in the morning Jan. 7, 2018, on the steps of The Palms after being struck by Alex Catterson, who was driving while intoxicated and was found guilty and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Hayes was found dead in January 2016 in her room. Since then, Sigma Kappa has held an event every year in dedication to them. Sigma Kappa Alumnae Relations Vice President Makenna Lee said the fundraiser is something that Sigma Kappa has had to do because of COVID-19.

“Since the pandemic, we have been unable to hold a memorial that includes the older sisters who knew her. For the past two years, we have held this donation booth for them,” Lee said in an email to the Missourian.

The Sigma Kappa donation booth sold raffle tickets for \$1 each and was open Jan. 24-28 in the J.W. Jones Student Union. The raffle tickets were for a chance to win one of two prize baskets, which were filled with snacks and treats. By the end of the week, Lee said, the sorority raised hundreds of dollars through participation from students and almost every Greek Life organization. Through the five days of three-hour raffle sales, Sigma Kappa managed to sell \$456 worth of raffle tickets.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving was founded in 1980 after 13-year-old Cari Lightner was killed in a drunken driving accident involving a three-time repeat DUI offend-

er in Fair Oaks, California. Lightner’s mother, Candance Lightner, started the nonprofit organization, and it quickly spread across the country.

MADD rates all of the states’ laws concerning DUIs out of five stars, and the organization rated Missouri 3.5, just above the national average, in 2019. The rating was due to Missouri’s 2017 defunding of sobriety checkpoints.

MADD’s Missouri office is based in St. Louis, Missouri. Sigma Kappa’s donations to MADD’s Missouri office will help MADD in its mission to improve the DUI laws across the nation.

“Even though none of our actives knew either of the girls, it is very important to us that we honor them in a respectful way,” Lee said. “We have been very passionate about these causes due to their unfortunate passing.”

CRIME LOG

for the week of Feb. 3

Northwest Missouri State University Police Department

Jan. 30
Carolyn Richey was trespassing in the Student Union.

Jan. 27
There is an open investigation for invasion of privacy in Millikan Hall.

Maryville Police Department

Jan. 31
There is an ongoing investigation for stealing by deceit on the 1200 block of Forest Street.

There is an ongoing investigation for littering on the 400 block of West Jenkins Street.

Jan. 29
There is an ongoing investigation for property damage on the 200 block of Volunteer Avenue.

There is an ongoing investigation for fraud on the 800 block of South Country Club Road.

Jan. 28
There is an ongoing investigation for harassment on the 1600 block of South Main Street.

A summons was issued to **Michael J. Ross**, 20, for a peace disturbance, possession of a fake ID and a minor in possession on the 200 block of North Mulberry Street.

There was an accident between **Shawn D. Padgett**, 58, and **Jamie R. Straw**, 43, on U.S. Highway 71 Bypass and East South Avenue.

Jan. 26
A cell phone was lost or stolen on the 1200 block of Parkdale Road.

There is an ongoing investigation for a code violation on the 1300 block of East Third Street.

There is an ongoing investigation for stealing on the 600 block of East Cooper Street.

There was an accident between **Henry Coira**, 21, and **Luke W. Davis**, 18, on the 1200 block of South Main Street.

HISTORY

CONTINUED FROM A1

The documentary captures the history of training Black doctors and nurses at the hospital through the viewpoint of Dr. Earle Robinson Jr., a second-generation physician and alumnus, whose dad was one of the first interns to graduate from Homer G. Phillips Hospital.

A second speaker will be brought to Northwest at 7 p.m. Feb. 23 in the J.W. Jones Student Union Boardroom. Dr. Mercy Dickson will speak about health care and its effects on people of color.

Black Student Union is partnering with the DI Office to host a spirit week Feb. 21-25. “Show your Hair-itage” will be Feb. 21, where people will be encouraged to wear their natural hair. Feb. 22 will be “Top Tier Tuesday,” where everyone on campus can “dress to impress.”

“What’s the Word Wednesday,” where there will be a pop culture scavenger hunt for prizes, will be from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Feb. 23. The hunt will start in the DI Office. Feb. 24 will be “Throwback Thursday,” where students can attend the Black Student Union meeting at 6 p.m. on the third floor of the Student Union to play games.

On the final day of the spirit week, Feb. 25 will be “For the People Friday,” where everyone on campus is invited to wear black in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

There will also be an event in collaboration with BSU and SISTAH at 6 p.m. in the Tower View Room on the third floor of the Student Union, where students are invited to play Black Card Revoked, a game that celebrates Black popular culture.

For the end of Black History Month, the DI Office, in partnership with Minority Men’s Organization, will be hosting a panel called “Ask a Black Person,” where students are invited to have conversations and ask questions about Black culture or other questions people may not normally feel comfortable asking.

“It gives everyone that avenue to be anonymous and to be vulnerable, and to get their questions answered amongst their peers and also faculty and staff that will be included on panel to get their answers as well,” Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator Brittany Morgan-Roberts said.



ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR

West Nodaway Board of Education member Jesse Cowden speaks at the board’s meeting Jan. 26 about possibly switching to a four-day school week to save money and resources. The decision will be made Feb. 9. Four-day school weeks have been adopted by schools across the state.

DISTRICTS

CONTINUED FROM A1

Not only has there been issues internally for the schools, West Nodaway School District said it has had difficulty navigating standards being set by different organizations.

Barnes said this school year has been more challenging than last year because the county health department, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and other agencies giving guidelines on how to handle COVID-19 quarantining don’t seem to be on the same page.

“The rules change all the time,” Barnes said. “Are we gonna do 15 days? Are we gonna do five days with a mask, then five days without? We’re left on our own, so we leaned back on the district policy.”

The pandemic has also caused supply chain shortages that are impacting the food being provided to schools for school lunch.

Barnes said West Nodaway schools have had issues with their regular school lunch suppliers, so the district had to use other methods to find the

supplies they needed to provide students with lunch.

Alvarez said there is likely no doubt the high school has had shortages, but there has been a limited effect on the menu and items provided to students.

Blackford said that there haven’t been many issues with food supply that have had a direct impact on students, but because of supply issues, food prices have become much higher.

“Even though the USDA is pretty much reimbursing per meal per child, sometimes that doesn’t cover the cost of the meal itself,” Blackford said.

Though there have been new struggles with navigating through the pandemic, some schools feel like they are better able to handle the new issues coming their way.

“When all this started back in 2020, we did not know what we were up against. There were so many unknowns,” Blackford said. “To compare and contrast the school years, I think now, as of today, I feel like we have a much better grip on what we’re dealing with. And we are basically looking at it just like any other virus, like the flu.”

“When all this started back in 2020, we did not know what we were up against.”

- JEFF BLACKFORD
WEST NODAWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT

CRT is a necessary part of education



CORBIN SMITH
Opinion Editor
@curly_corbs

Race is often considered controversial. Whether you “see color” or not, race has to be acknowledged because it impacts multiple realms of life. Instead of ignoring it, I choose to do my best to understand it and educate others about it. That’s the purpose of For The Culture. For this same reason, it’s important for schools to teach critical race theory.

Critical race theory is an intellectual and social movement emphasizing that race is a social construct used to oppress and exploit people of color, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica. Its framework of legal analysis is based on the premise that race is not a biologically grounded feature of different subgroups of human beings.

Notice that race is referred to as a social construct. At its simplest, it’s the same as seeing two different colored teams and labeling them for the sake of labels. Each player is an athlete, just in different uniforms. Unfortunately, these labels have been weaponized for hatred and division among different racial groups.

Currently, the Missouri House of Representatives is debating a bill to ban CRT in K-12 schools. Surrounding states are pushing for similar action. Republican Sen. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee wrote a letter pushing to ban CRT under the premise that it’s divisive and shames white people, a common argument. She said CRT segregates people into categories of oppressor or victim, and it’s solely focused on skin color.

Well, duh — race is skin color. It’s stupid to focus on race, so why was the construct created in the first place? Now that generations of trauma exist, are we supposed to act like it doesn’t exist? I hate to admit it, but much of history is about the fight between oppressed and oppressors. However, we need to learn from history so we can avoid continued trauma.

CRT is a way to bring up these tough realities that people of color are harmed for their skin color. We need to understand history, how it affects modern society and why it was wrong for people to be treated the way they were. The objective isn’t for white people to be ashamed of themselves; it’s to show that oppression shouldn’t be a tool in the construction of a “successful” society.

North Carolina State University professor Michael Schwable argues that CRT can do the opposite of what Blackburn said. By questioning unequal social arrangements and uniting to overcome them, the U.S. can eliminate unproductive guilt and turn ideals of fairness and equity into reality.

If education is important in society, we shouldn’t neglect it. Refusing to teach CRT is indirectly refusing to address systemic issues, as well as refusing students an inclusive education.

At my age, I should know significantly more. I hope the next generation receives the correct tools to make the world a better place.

THE STROLLER: Your Bearcat loves upset Chiefs fans

To my fellow Chiefs fans, I think you’re great and all, but for once in your life, shut up about losing a game. The Chiefs lost. Let me say that again to make sure everyone understood that correctly: The Chiefs lost.

I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but, newsflash, it happened. Yes, we are all upset, and it is quite unfortunate. But here’s the thing; it isn’t the first time this has happened. Might I remind you of Super Bowl 55.

Still a touchy subject for some of you, but I have an idea. Let it go.

I can admit that I love the Chiefs just as much as the next, and I was thoroughly disappointed. But some of you are more upset about Sunday’s game than you were at your grandma’s funeral. You can’t avoid Twitter for the next week or two because your anger issues are not made to withstand the reality of the truth. It happened, and now you gotta move on.

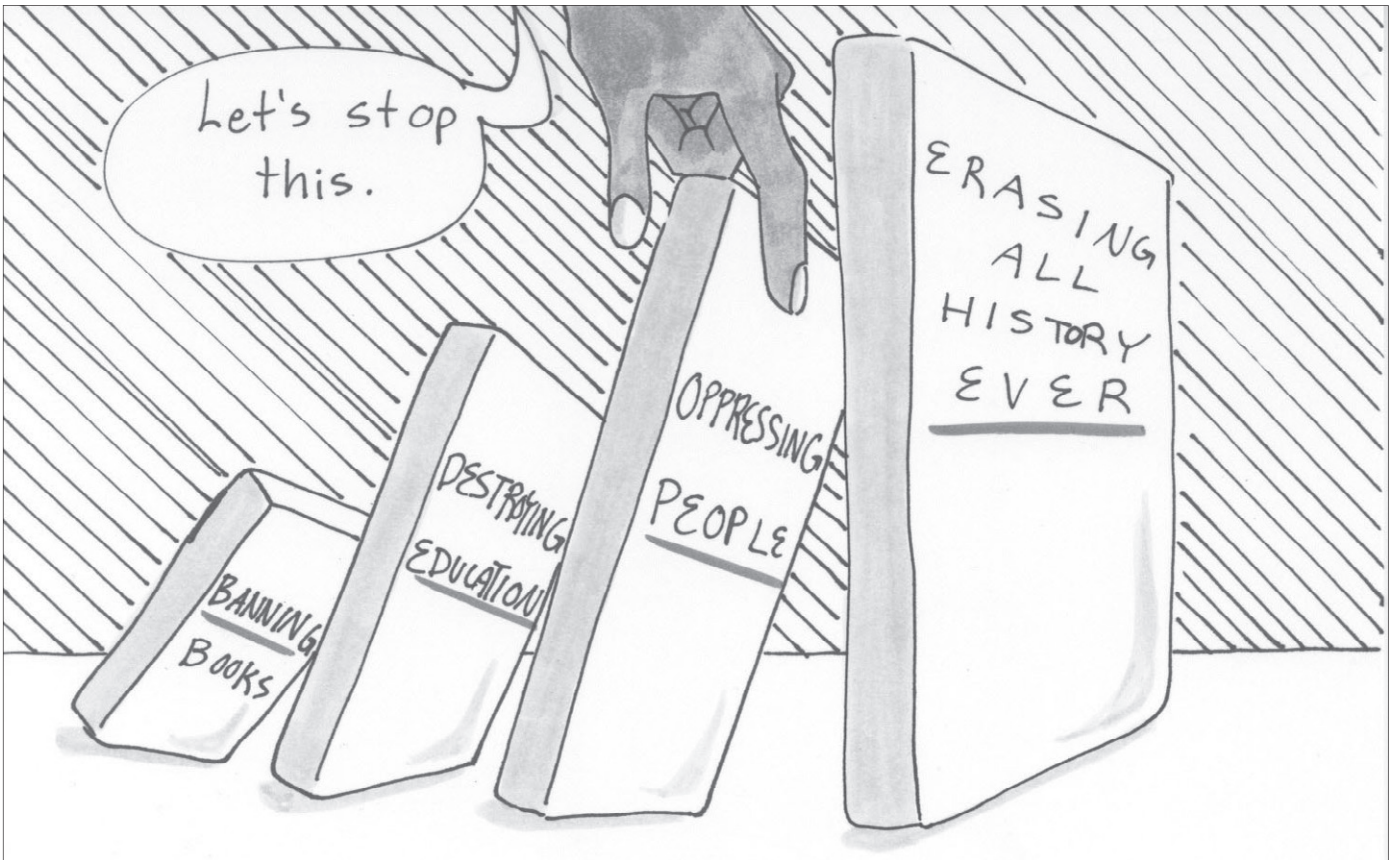
Dawg, here is your first issue: You complain and complain until someone doesn’t want to talk to you anymore. That is purely unattractive. Sports are sports, and although it is great to be a fan, your complaining is not going to send the Chiefs to the SoFi Stadium.

You are making yourself just as insufferable as that god-awful Walker Hayes song – yet, I’d rather hear that than you right now. I am so sorry that the only thing you depend on

for happiness is now over, but might I interest you in a hobby or, like, even some friends.

Put your Mahomes jersey away. The season is over. I know you are going to watch the Super Bowl anyway, so you might as well let it go. Start thinking about what team you are going to root for on the 13th because, unfortunately, it isn’t the Chiefs.

The Stroller has been a tradition since 1918 and does not reflect the views of The Northwest Missourian.



ALEXANDRIA MESZ CARTOONIST

OUR VIEW:

Northwest students need to learn from eras of tragedy

Eras are easily remembered because of the horrific events that happened during them. The monuments, days of remembrance and museums help us learn more about and conceptualize the tragedies that took place during certain eras, when historical literature can’t give them the justice they deserve.

The Auschwitz exhibit at Union Station in Kansas City, Missouri, pays homage to those who suffered in one of the most infamous concentration camps during the Holocaust. It’s an important exhibit students and those in the community should go see.

Despite today’s technological advancement and dependency, it seems like not many people, ourselves included, are educated well enough on historical events. Insensitive comments and a general lack of knowledge of events of this magnitude can be chalked up to ignorance.

In the essence of transparency, the Northwest Missourian Editorial Board must acknowledge it was unaware International Holocaust Remembrance Day is celebrated Jan. 27. It’s also the reason we decided to write this Our View — to point out the lack of education on certain global tragedies. The

Editorial Board encourages students to take time to learn and understand how events such as the Holocaust impacted the world.

However, students can’t be completely to blame for their lack of information. School systems are regularly criticized for implementing or failing to implement various genres of curriculum. Recently, a Tennessee school district chose to ban a piece of literature from its lesson plans.

In early January, the McMinn County School Board voted to ban the Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel “Maus” from its eighth grade curriculum. The board was concerned with the novel’s profanity and an image of female nudity.

Written by Art Spiegelman, “Maus” is about his Jewish relatives’ horrific experiences during the Holocaust, his mother’s suicide and the author’s relationship with his father. The instance of nudity was in reference to his mother. It’s hard to imagine the author would be using his late mother as a ploy to push sexual themes to eighth graders.

“Maus” is being banned for innocuous reasons, adding it to the esteemed list of books such as To Kill

a Mockingbird” and “Animal Farm,” that were banned by overreaching school boards grasping at straws.

Schools preach the importance of primary sources in research. Novels written with historical context are some of the best means of learning an educational system could ask students to utilize.

The Editorial Board does not advise schools to follow the McMinn County School Board’s decision. We should work with what we’ve been given and learn as much as we can before the history we’re ignoring is forgotten.

Works like “Maus” and exhibits like the Auschwitz one are even more important now with a small but growing sect of anti-semitism seeping its way into major national political movements by way of conspiracy theorists and ignorant legislatures.

Professors should make it an extra credit opportunity to go see the Auschwitz exhibit in Kansas City, Missouri. It’s an invaluable learning experience, and students appreciate extra credit.

The best way to prevent future harm from historical tragedies is to educate people about them. The exhibit in Union Station is a great way to do just that.

YOUR VIEW:

Would you visit the Holocaust exhibit in Kansas City? Why or why not?

EMMA BJORK
Senior
Mass Media Broadcast
Production & Writing



“I definitely feel educated on the Holocaust, and I do feel like museums have helped. I’m fortunate enough to have been to the Holocaust Museum in D.C., and I learned a lot while I was there.”

ALEXI FOURNIER
Senior
Instrumental Music
Education



“I do, and I think museums help. They’re a much more interactive way for people to learn. You’re able to hear stories, see pictures or read letters and stuff.”

KAITLYN STEHLIK
Junior
Chemistry



“I do feel educated about the Holocaust, but I got most of my education for it in high school. I feel that museums do help show some of the history, but they can’t show all of it.”

NORTHWEST MISSOURIAN

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Newsroom:	(660) 562-1224
Advertising:	(660) 562-1635

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Track and field freshman sets homeland mark in Kansas trip

DAVID DERKS
Missourian Reporter I @NWMSports

Multiple Bearcats ran away with event titles, and others shared success, as the Northwest track and field team competed against multiple Division I teams in the Jayhawk Classic Jan. 28 at the Anschutz Sports Pavilion in Lawrence, Kansas.

Redshirt freshman Reece Smith, junior Amber Owens, redshirt freshman David Hipshire, redshirt freshman Prince Griffin and freshman Luisarys Toledo – more commonly known as “Luci” – all took home first place in their respective competitions, as more Bearcats improved their chances at a spot in the 2022 NCAA Division II Indoor Championships.

Toledo, freshman Chloe Saenz and sophomore Tiffany Hughey competed in both the 4x400 women’s relay and the 400-meter dash, and all three finished top five in both events.

“I thought we performed really well on the women’s side,” coach Brandon Masters said. “They brought a great attitude, had some great marks and competed hard. We got some really nice marks coming out of KU. We got several things I thought we could get on the women’s side.”

Toledo took first place in the 400 with a time of 55 seconds and 75 milliseconds, Saenz took second in the 400 with a personal best time of 57.03 and Hughey took fifth (57.67). All three women competed in the 4x400 and took second place, 35-hundredths of a second behind the Kansas’ “A” team, with a time of 3:47.64.

“We came in wanting to run a faster time on the relay because that would get us a conversion. So that would get us at the top of the national list, which is where we’re at right now,” Hughey said regarding the 4x400 women’s relay. “I think we’re second, but we did achieve that.”

Toledo – who was named the women’s track MIAA Athlete of the Week Feb. 1 – felt good about her performance but believes both herself and the 4x400 team can improve.

“Luci is just fantastic; she’s sitting at No. 2 in the country,” Masters said. “Our 4x4 was fantastic – another great race – almost catching KU at the line ... but that conversion put us at No. 2 in the country as well.”

“(We) didn’t have expectations on the 400, because (she) hadn’t run it before,” Masters said of Toledo. “But I think (she) had expectations on the 4x4 – (she) wanted to be good, win conference and have a chance to be in the race at nationals. So, I think we’re into nationals, and we have a shot to be great when it counts.”

Toledo is originally from Valencia, Venezuela, and after this week’s race, she holds the Venezuelan indoor national 400 record.

“Luci is a multi-event ath-



Northwest freshman Luisarys Toledo runs in the Mel Tjeerdsma Classic Dec. 4 in the Carl and Cheryl Fieldhouse. At the Jayhawk Classic Jan. 28 at the Anschutz Sports Pavilion in Lawrence, Kansas, Toledo took home first place and improved her chances at a spot in the 2022 NCAA Division II Indoor Championships.

lete, and we haven’t got to do a lot on the multi, so that’s kind of what we want to start looking at for this weekend,” Masters said. “She’s very experienced in everything but the 400. So that will be fun over the next couple weeks, being able to get back in and do a few more things that she wants to do.”

The next couple of weeks for the Bearcats will include two more meets prior to the MIAA Championship Feb. 25-27 in the Carl and Cheryl Hughes Fieldhouse. For now, they’ll focus on their last home meet of the indoor season, the Northwest Open, Feb. 4-5.

NSD CONTINUED FROM A8

“Jay’s more of a big, physical, downhill-style runner. He’s got great feet. He’s faster than you think. ... When he walks in the room, he looks like a college football player,” Wright said. “The Richardson kid from down in Waynesville, he’s more of a speed guy, ... Really explosive, really fast, can do a lot of different things.”

The second priority, as Wright said, was to address the receiver corps.

After graduating Kaden Davis, Alec Tatum and Imoni Donadelle, the Bearcats’ offense will have eight new receivers on the roster next.

Three of those are transfers, including Maryville’s own Tate Oglesby and Division I transfer Tyson Priddy, who was previously at Kansas State. But the Bearcats, Wright said, aren’t done looking for new gadgets

for the offense despite the eight new faces in addition to the 13 expected returners from 2021.

“We’re still gonna go through the spring, evaluate and look at portal guys, look at guys who can make a more immediate impact in the program,” Wright said. “We’ll continue to do that throughout the spring.”

And the third priority, as Wright said, was to bolster the secondary.

The Bearcats did just that, signing eight defensive backs in this class. As important as each of them might become, the most prominent of the bunch at the moment is Cade Stacy, who will join Northwest on the heels of a senior campaign that was good enough to be named The Oklahoman’s defensive MVP in the state.

Stacy, following a farewell tour that resulted in the 6-foot-4 defensive back leading Jenks High School to a 6A-D1 title, will join a secondary that’s expected to return quite a few fa-

miliar faces next fall.

“I mean, anybody that knows midwest football knows Jenks. You say the words ‘Jenks,’ and they know exactly what you’re talking about,” Wright said. “He was a big-time player, defensive player of the year. He’s got great cover skills, and it was definitely a good get for us.”

The rest of the 35-person class was rounded out with a long snapper, kicker, linebacker, quarterback, tight end, six offensive linemen and five defensive linemen.

While reflecting on the program’s newest addition, sitting at a table-cloth covered table on the upper floor of Maryville’s A&G Restaurant, nearly two months removed from sitting down to curate a path on his staff’s latest recruiting trail, Wright had already turned his attention toward spring ball.

He’s now looking forward to just one thing.

“Getting the pads back on and getting after it,” Wright said.

MILLER CONTINUED FROM A8

Coach Justin Kamrad said Nick Miller is special.

“The biggest thing for him is just his high energy and high motor that he plays with all the time,” Kamrad said. “There’s never a second guess if he’s going to get off the ball or not.”

Both his dad and coach said they’ve seen a lot more out of Nick Miller than just the player.

For his dad, he said he sees someone who has grown into a strong individual.

For his coach, he said he sees someone who was always there to help.

“He was voted team captain for us, and you always really tell he was helping the young-

HUDGINS CONTINUED FROM A8

He had a career-high 40 points during the Bearcats’ 90-57 win over Rogers State Dec. 4, which marked the fifth-best scoring performance in program history. His career-best outing was largely due to his program-record 11 3-pointers against the Hillcats.

“I knew I shot a lot of 3s; I didn’t know I was that close,” Hudgins said Dec. 4. “I was just in the game, and I was just shooting.”

And that’s seemingly been the story for Hudgins – never knowing or caring about the whichever milestone he’s bound to eclipse on any given night.

Except for one.

During the Bearcats’ 96-63 win over Lincoln Jan. 27, Hudgins was a part of a second-half sequence in which Northwest drained 10 straight shots from beyond the arc. His sixth make of the game from 3-point range moved him by now-associate head coach Zach Schneider for the most triples made in program history (371).

After that moment, he immediately turned toward Northwest’s bench and waved directly at Schneider.

Despite now being the program’s all-time best scorer, assister and shooter, Hudgins wasn’t too concerned with shattering yet another record. Roughly 48 hours prior to his latest record-setting performance, he was more so focused on doing whatever it took to will Northwest to its 19th win this season.

“If it happens, it happens,” Hudgins said Thursday evening after the Bearcats’ win over Lincoln.

He, of course, used the matchup against the Mules to put one more of those milestones in his rearview mirror – not that he was worried about it anyway.

“There’s still a long way to go this season, so I’m not really focused on it,” Hudgins said. “When we took a timeout and they announced it, I was like, ‘OK, pretty cool,’ but that’s about it.”

Assistant Sports Editor Wesley Miller contributed to this report.

15

sacks recorded by Nick Miller while playing for Lewis Central

er kids and showing them the ropes,” Kamrad said.

“I’ve seen what you would hope to see,” Dan Miller said. “I’ve seen a lot of maturity from Nick over the last couple of years. He’s grown into a fine young man, and we’re proud of who he is.”

Northwest is now without 2021 Cliff Harris Award winner Sam Roberts, in which Nick Miller might try to eventually fill in the shoes for fellow defensive end.

While he said he knows he has a long way to go before that happens, he’s ready for anything.

“I mean, I’m just gonna go in there and work hard,” Nick Miller said. “I’m excited to get to work, and I know the older guys will help me become the best player that I can be.”

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McCollum passes predecessor in 20th victory

JON WALKER
Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

Northwest men’s basketball coach Ben McCollum didn’t care about much in the aftermath of an 82-71 win over MIAA foe Missouri Southern Feb. 1 in Bearcat Arena. But he did, of course, care about a couple things.

McCollum seemingly cared the most about his defense, unpromptedly noting that his team’s “offense was good, too, but the defense was really good.”

But the thing he came around to care about the most is that he was reminded that he had just passed his former coach, Steve Tappmeyer, for the most 20-win seasons in Northwest history.

“Tapp’s probably one of a very small handful of mentors that had a huge impact on the way the program is ran, the way I coach, the way I treat people, the way I act,” McCollum said. “To be able to pass that — individual accomplishments don’t mean a ton — but I think that one adds some nostalgia to it.”

“It’s a big deal from, you know — that’s my mentor.”

The No. 4 Bearcats’ 20th win of the season, the one that helped them eclipse that mark for the 11th time in McCollum’s 13-year tenure, seemed all too likely after they had five people score within the first 10 minutes.

Northwest (20-2, 13-1 MIAA) was 7-for-13 at that point, hitting shots at a clip hovering around 53%. The Lions (11-8, 8-5 MIAA) were 5-for-16 after



Men’s basketball coach Ben McCollum watches the second half of his team’s eventual 82-71 win over Missouri Southern Feb. 1. The No. 4 Bearcats’ scored their 20th win of the season, the 11th time in McCollum’s 13-year tenure.

the first 10 minutes, using an up-tempo pace to try and outlast the Bearcats’ stifling defense.

It seemed as if it was going to work, as Southern nailed a triple to cut Northwest’s lead to 12-10 a few moments prior to the midway mark of the first half. That’s when Northwest redshirt-freshman guard Mitch Mascari nailed a shot of his own from beyond the arc.

“My teammates were just finding me,” said Mascari, who finished with a career-high 11 points while going a perfect 3-for-3 from deep. “I was able to get my first one in; it felt good. Just kept shooting when I was open.”

Mascari logged a career-high

28 minutes, and it was due to the Bearcats’ sixth man, redshirt-freshman guard Byron Alexander, not feeling well with an illness that isn’t COVID-19, McCollum said.

“He made the most of his opportunity,” McCollum said. “Mitch, fortunately, stepped up and was able to perform and play well.”

All of Mascari’s 11 points came in the first half, and his shooting spurt embodied the rest of the team’s, too.

After being plagued by slow starts throughout this season, the Bearcats used the first half to shoot 60.9% (14-for-24) from the field and 7-for-10 from beyond the arc. That, which in-

cluded junior guard Trevor Hudgins not missing any of his four en route to 11 first-half points, helped Northwest carry a 82-71 into the break.

“They’re a tough team. They always try to confuse us on ball screens,” Mascari said of Southern.

That hot start carried over into the second, too, as Northwest used a game-high 24 points from Hudgins to climb out to a game-high lead of 23 points with four minutes left in regulation.

The ‘Cats continued to shoot well, eventually finishing at a clip of 55.6% (25-for-45) from the field and from beyond the arc (10-for-18), marking the

16th time throughout the season’s 22 games that they’ve made at least 50% of their shots.

With 14 minutes left in the second half, Northwest had made three more shots than Southern while taking nine less attempts.

“I think it’s just that we all know how to play with each other,” Mascari said. “We all know how to play to each other’s strengths.”

And that defense, the one that McCollum was enthralled over in the wake of the Bearcats’ fourth straight win, held the Lions to their fourth-worst shooting performance of the season.

Southern finished 41.9% from the field and shot 26-for-62. The Lions made one more shot than the Bearcats on 17 more attempts.

“I thought our scout execution was phenomenal,” McCollum said. “I thought we were dialed into it. ... I thought we were really dialed in, defensively.”

Now, following their third straight double-digit win over Southern, the Bearcats will turn their attention toward a rematch with MIAA rival Missouri Western Feb. 4 in St. Joseph.

The ‘Cats handed the Griffons (9-11, 5-7 MIAA) a 101-63 loss Dec. 18 in Bearcat Arena, and Mascari is hoping his squad carries that same fortune with it on its 45-mile trek down Highway 71.

“It’s gonna be a fun game,” Mascari said. “Hopefully there’s gonna be a crowd, a little loud. Wouldn’t be surprised if that game’s chippy, too. It’ll be fun.”

Women set to start four-game road trip with rematch with rival Missouri Western

WESLEY MILLER
Asst. Sports Editor | @wesleymiller360

After back-to-back home games for Northwest women’s basketball, the Bearcats will leave behind Bearcat Arena to embark on a four-game road trip.

They’re trying to leave the last of their home games in the past after falling to Central Missouri (15-7) 58-54 Jan. 29 — the second loss against the Jennies this season for the Bearcats.

“I thought we played pretty well in both games,” coach Austin Meyer said. “You know, the Central Missouri game, I thought we were really into the game. They just made plays in the fourth quarter, and we weren’t able to make enough of them on our end.”

The Bearcats’ first chance to put the narrow loss behind them

will be against Highway 71 rival Missouri Western (16-3).

Northwest will make the 45-mile trek to St. Joseph Feb. 5 not only with the hopes of getting back into the win column but also to make good on the team’s first win over Western. The two squads first met Dec. 18 in Bearcat Arena. In the end, the home team escaped with the 49-46 win in what was the Bearcats’ final game of 2021.

“We got to make sure we’re ready to play and come with that competitive desire,” Meyer said. “Obviously, after winning that first game, they’re gonna be ready to go, and they’re gonna be ready to play.”

There might be a little more to the rivalry between the Bearcats and Griffons this season than the close proximity between the programs.

After playing in the green and white herself for four seasons between 2017-21, Jaelyn Haggard, Northwest’s all-time leader in 3-point makes, returned to her hometown of St. Joseph to become a graduate student at Western.

Haggard is 35-for-97 (36.1%) from 3-point range while sporting the black and gold.

Despite never playing alongside Haggard, Northwest freshman guard Evelyn Vazquez knows what playing against the former Bearcat might mean for her teammates.

“We want to win every game, but that game we just really, really, really wanna win,” Vazquez said.

“I mean, she’s a good player, a really good shooter, a good kid, everything. But I think, if anything, we don’t want her to get shots, because she’s an elite 3-point shooter,” Meyer said. “I think it’s just another game.”

Before the Bearcats begin their journey of four road games in seven days, the team has a week between the Central Missouri and Western games to prepare, take some days off and strengthen up for the schedule ahead.

Vazquez said having extended time off is a good opportunity to relax and catch her breath a little, especially with the new experience of playing collegiate basketball.

“Coming from high school, we used to beat teams by, like, 40. But then I come to the MIAA, and it’s crazy,” Vazquez



Northwest women’s basketball senior guard Mallory McConkey fights past a player from Central Missouri during the Bearcats’ 54-58 loss Jan. 29 in Bearcat Arena. The loss ended the Bearcats’ three-game winning streak. McConkey reached double figures, scoring 10 points throughout the game.

said. “Every game you go into, regardless if it’s the worst team in the league or the No. 1 team, you never know how the game is gonna go.”

Vazquez’s playing time will likely continue heading into the team’s four-game road stretch, and she said she hopes to give the team all the help she can.

Despite winning nine conference games so far — the most conference wins in a season since 2010-11 — Meyer said

he believes the team is on the verge of truly breaking out, and he the road trip might be when it happens.

“There’s multiple games we’ve won that are close, but we’ve also had some games against top-tier teams in the conference that we weren’t able to pull out,” Meyer said. “We’re just so close to getting over that hump and getting a signature win against an elite team.”

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ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR
Northwest men's basketball junior guard Trevor Hudgins directs the Bearcats' offense during a 89-49 win over MIAA foe Central Missouri Jan. 29 in Bearcat Arena. Hudgins nailed a 3-pointer with 6 minutes and 34 seconds left in the game to pass his predecessor, Justin Pitts, as the program's all-time leading scorer with 2,460 points across his four-year tenure as the starting point guard.

Hudgins becomes all-time leading scorer

JON WALKER
Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

After making his sixth basket of the game during Northwest men's basketball's matchup with MIAA foe Central Missouri Jan. 29 in Bearcat Arena, Trevor Hudgins surpassed his predecessor, Justin Pitts, as the program's all-time leading scorer.

The No. 5 Bearcats were leading the Mules 69-39 when Hudgins nailed a corner 3-pointer with 6:34 left in the second half.

And shortly after, amid a break in the action, Hudgins received a standing ovation from the 1,854 spectators inside of Bearcat Arena.

"Honestly, when I hear about it, I just think about all the players that I've played with over the years," Hudgins said in the aftermath of the Bearcats' 89-49 win. "It's a credit to them. They put me in a position to score, they got me open and they passed to me when I was open. I feel like it's a team achievement. I am going to nudge Justin just a little bit, though."

"From his redshirt year — when he was getting his butt kicked by Justin Pitts — and from being coached pretty hard, he's just continued to get better and maintain a sense of humility," coach Ben McCollum said.

Hudgins, a native of Manhattan, Kansas, entered the season needing 527 points to pass Pitts, who held the top spot (2,459) after a four-year career at Northwest from 2014-18.

That made the once-thought impossible seem inevitable, though, as Hudgins didn't score less than 594 points in each of his first three years as a Bearcat.

And it might be crazy to think that the reigning NABC Division II Player of the Year could get even better, but he's done just that.

Hudgins entered the win over Central Missouri averaging a career-best 25.5 points per contest — nearly 6 points more than his previous career high of 19.8 from the 2020-21 season. He got there by way of 14 20-point games and six 30-point games.

SEE HUDGINS | A6

Miller set to join older brother in football program

WESLEY MILLER
Asst. Sports Editor | @wesleymiller360

Titan Stadium has been the place Nick Miller played football for the past four seasons from 2018-21.

But the Council Bluffs, Iowa, native will soon leave behind the blue and gray of the Lewis Central High School Titans to join the green and white of Northwest, making Bearcat Stadium the new home for Miller to play football.

"It's truly a blessing," Miller said. "It's a place like no other. Opportunities that are there, I believe, are some of the best in the nation, and you can't really find them in other places. So I'm extremely excited."

The defensive end unofficially committed to Northwest Jan. 21 via Twitter.

While collegiate ball will be a new experience for him, it's nothing new to his family — even at Northwest.

The Millers will now have two Bearcats in the household, as he'll join his older brother, Brady, in Maryville this summer.

"I'm most excited to go and play with my brother and being able to play with him a few more times," Nick Miller said.

Their dad, Dan Miller, played

collegiate basketball at MidAmerica Nazarene University.

He said it's been unbelievable to see not one but two of his sons go on to play in the next level.

"To be associated with and play for a program the caliber of Northwest Missouri State is really a great opportunity and an honor for our boys," Dan Miller said. "We're excited, to say the least."

Nick Miller will go from helping a team go 11-2 and become Iowa 4A State Champions in his farewell tour as a Titan to trying to help Northwest's football program win a seventh national championship.

Northwest is fresh off its 31st outright conference title in the MIAA and owns the most football national championships in Division II history.

Nick Miller said he knows it'll be a challenge, but he's proud of himself for being able to play at a storied program like Northwest.

"It really shows the hard work has paid off," Nick Miller said. "It shows that I can play."

One other person Nick Miller has been around during his time at Lewis Central also knows he can play.

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JON WALKER SPORTS EDITOR
Northwest football coach Rich Wright addresses his team following a 13-7 win over Fort Hays Sept. 2 in Hays, Kansas. Wright and his staff signed 35 student-athletes on Feb. 2 as part of the annual National Signing Day.

Football inks 35 as part of 2022 National Signing Day

JON WALKER
Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

Northwest football coach Rich Wright had a lot to think about after the Bearcats' season-ending loss to eventual Division II champion Ferris State Dec. 4 in Big Rapids, Michigan.

He, of course, had thoughts on the program's third straight loss to Ferris in the postseason. He also had a mid-December trip planned with his family to Walt Disney World in Orlando, one that allowed him to think about things other than football for the first time in countless months.

But somewhere in between those two events, Wright sat down with his coaching staff to figure out the program's next step forward. With National Signing Day just a couple of months away from that moment, Wright and his staff had a few specific things come to mind for their plan of action.

"The big areas of concern were running back ... wide re-

ceiver, just because of the volume of kids that we lost, then to replenish our secondary, were probably our top three priorities," Wright said.

So when early February rolled around, it was evident that those areas were, indeed, emphasized. Wright and company used this year's National Signing Day, Feb. 2, to welcome 30 high school recruits and five transfers into the program.

The first priority, as Wright said, was to address the backfield.

He's gone to the transfer portal three times in the last three years, the latest of the three being University of Indianapolis transfer and NFL hopeful Al McKeller.

So, in addition to a backfield that will include senior Davonte' Green, sophomore Robert Rawie and sophomore Jadon Brady — three guaranteed returners for next fall — the Bearcats signed a pair of running backs in Jay Harris and Eric Richardson.

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EL MAGUEY

PHONE
(660) 562-1104

ADDRESS
964 S Main St
Maryville, MO

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